

155, HIGH STREET,

NEW BROMPTON, KENT,

*February 1895.*

*To the Chairman and Councillors of the Gillingham  
Urban Sanitary District.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honor to submit for your perusal, my Annual Report to the 31st December, 1894, in regard to the health and general sanitary condition of the Urban District of Gillingham, Kent, which I venture to think will satisfactorily compare with other years, and also with other districts adjacent to us, and also towns of the same proportion of inhabitants.

In regard to statistics, we still maintain a high birth rate (although not quite so high as last year). That, I still attribute to the very healthy position we occupy, and also that a very large proportion of our married population are young and robust. The estimated population up to the middle of the year 1894, is 30,205.

The number of births were 907, as compared with 956 last year, of these, 468 were males and 439 females, the excess being on the male side, which is the rule amongst European races. This gives a mean birth-rate of 30·0 per thousand, as compared with 32·2 per thousand for last year. This I find on reading reports of large towns in reference to birth rate coincides with ours, as their birth rate declined 0·8 per thousand from the rate recorded in 1893, and is 2·5 per thousand below the mean rate in the ten preceding years 1884–1893.

The number of deaths registered during the year was 344 as compared with 399 last year, and gives a mean annual death rate of 11·3 against 13·5 per thousand for last year. This decline, which is of a satisfactory character, is also noted in the return of large towns, their death rate being 18·1 per thousand, which is by far the lowest on record, and as much as 3·2 per thousand below the mean rate in the ten preceding years 1884–1893. The death rate of London during 1894 was equal to 17·8 per thousand, while

it ranged in 32 provincial towns from 13.2 to 23.8 per thousand.

Taking the deaths in age groups they were as follows :—

Under one	...	123	} 157 under 5 years.
1 and under 5 years		34	
5	" 15	13	} 187 over 5 years.
15	" 25	12	
25	" 65	97	
65 and upwards		65	

One notices from this table as in previous years, the two extremes of life are most susceptible to vicissitudes of weather and atmospheric changes.

The totals for the respective months were as follows :—

January	50.	May	21.	September	31.
February	28.	June	24.	October	27.
March	33.	July	23.	November	29.
April	22.	August	34.	December	23.

The deaths from zymotic diseases during the year were 23, viz :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	4
Enteric or Typhoid Fever			1
Whooping Cough		...	4
Diarrhœa	...	...	11
Measles	...	...	3

Which gives a mean death rate for these diseases of 0.7 per thousand; this again gives for Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough of 0.1 per thousand, and for Diarrhœa of 0.3 per thousand.

The deaths which resulted from diseases of the chest were 101 in number, slightly below the number for last year, which was 105. This gives a death rate of 3.3 per thousand for all chest diseases. The cases of Phthisis (or Consumption) were 19, as against 36 for last year, and gives a death rate of 0.6 per thousand for that disease.

The Infectious Diseases Notification Act is still in force in this district, and, in my opinion, is a valuable measure, and has no doubt greatly tended to allay any serious spread of these diseases. The numbers reported in each quarter were as follows :—

March	26.	June	23.
September	14.	December	44.

The Council, at my suggestion, have undertaken the disinfection of all houses in which infectious cases occur,

free of cost, which satisfies me that these measures are thoroughly carried out. Of the notified cases, 26 were removed to our Infectious Hospital, which is situated in large grounds at the highest part of the district, well away from all houses, and can at any time be easily enlarged, or have temporary structures erected.

During the year, we have had no serious outbreak of infectious disease, and I have had no cause which has tended to disturb the regular working of all schools, as last year I had to close them in consequence of the rapid spread of influenza.

Dairies, Slaughter Houses and Cow Sheds have been regularly inspected, and when not satisfactory, instructions have immediately been given for either the renovation or cleansing of the same, special care has also been taken before granting licenses to Dairymen, to see that their premises are suitable for that purpose, viz.:—in regard to distance from privies, cesspools, etc., and also that a proper building was erected for washing of cans.

In reference to Scavenging, the Surveyor's department is carried out in a highly satisfactory manner. At times complaints are received with respect to collection of house refuse, but I am able from my weekly returns received from the Assistant Inspector, and of which I spoke last year, to refer to each special case, and I have always satisfied myself from personal inspection, that there has been no serious ground of complaint. This refuse is still deposited on the same spot as before, viz.:—by the river bank, and is utilised for the making a road to the proposed pier, which should be a source of great benefit to the district.

With regard to emptying of cesspools and removal of their contents well away from the town, this work is well done, and especially when one considers the vast increase of house property which of a necessity entails more work for the night staff.

In reference to the Main Drainage Scheme which has met with approval of the Local Government Board, and will I have no doubt be soon commenced, it should be a source of permanent benefit to the town, in that, we shall be paying for a lasting benefit and not a temporary one, which the cess-pool system only can be. The point, in my opinion, which requires great supervision, and which I trust the Council will give

serious attention to, is the thorough joining of pipes, especially in the cases where they will have to pass under the house. This is often a source of great danger, and at times is only discovered when disease shews itself in the house.

Our Water Supply still comes from the same source, and continues to be as pure as ever. The Water Works are situated in the Luton Valley. The only fault I find with the water is its extreme hardness, and it certainly would be a great benefit to the population, could the Directors of the Water Company soften it before distributing it to their customers.

All known wells in the district are closed, and therefore the source of danger, viz. :—soakage from cesspool into well is stopped, and which, undoubtedly, at times has been the source of carrying disease.

In regard to House Drainage, every attention is given to the subject, and in all cases where trapping or disconnection is not thoroughly carried out, notices are served on owners, and the work is carried out under the immediate supervision of the Inspector of Nuisances, who, I am pleased to say is a thorough officer, and one who carries out his duties to my entire satisfaction.

The Model Bye-laws adopted by the late Board, are, I believe working satisfactorily.

Trusting your Council will be satisfied with the foregoing report, and information contained therein,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

**E. C. WARREN,**

Medical Officer of Health.